

March 14, 2016

Testimony to the Judiciary Committee on HB 5054, SB 429 and HB 5597

I would like to encourage the Judiciary Committee to support bills, HB 5054, An Act Protecting Victims of Domestic Violence; and SB 429 An Act Concerning Service of Restraining Orders. They both contain objectives which are important for the safety of domestic violence victims: 1) having sworn police officers make service of temporary restraining orders; and 2) removing firearms from subjects of temporary restraining orders pending a hearing to take place no more than 14 days later.

I encourage the Committee to oppose HB 5597, because it sets in motion the risk warrant process if a restraining order indicates that the subject is in possession of a firearm. The risk warrant process, while effective and well intentioned, does not serve the needs of many domestic violence victims, because it immediately sends police to confront the abuser. Many women in this situation do not want to go to the police to confront the abuser. They feel that doing that puts them in greater jeopardy. They feel much more comfortable going to the safety and comfort of the court to obtain a restraining order and have it served. That is not as intimidating a situation, in their mind, as a visit by a police who then obtain a risk warrant. This provision is opposed by the Battered Women's Justice Project, which is intimately aware of the implications for domestic violence victims of different requirements placed on them in seeking protection from an abusive partner.

Thank you,

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